



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION/QUOTATION (RFQQ)

Acquisition Title: **Sign Language Interpreter Services
RFQQ # 0656-201**

Summary of Expected Results: As a result of this RFQQ, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) will award multiple Sign Language Interpreter Services contracts to agencies and/or individuals to provide functionally equivalent access to quality communication through face to face sign language interpreting/transliterating for deaf, deaf/blind and hard of hearing clients, citizens and employees of the State of Washington.

Response Due Date: This solicitation is open FROM June 14, 2006 through June 28, 2006. All responses, whether mailed or hand delivered, must be received by 3:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on June, 28, 2006 at the following address.

Faxed or electronically mailed responses will not be accepted.

Submit Response to: Anita Ahumada, RFQQ Coordinator
Department of Social & Health Services
Administrative Services Division / Central Contract Services

Mailing Address:	Physical Address:
P.O. BOX 45811	4500 10 th Avenue SE
Olympia, Washington 98504-5811	Lacey, Washington 98503

Telephone: (360) 664-6079
FAX: (360) 664-6184
Email ahumaae@dshs.wa.gov
Reference: RFQQ – #0656-201

Bidder Eligibility: This solicitation is open to those individuals or organizations that satisfy the qualifications stated herein. See the section of this RFQQ entitled **Minimum Qualifications**.

Special Notes: Bidders are responsible to access the RFQQ document through the DSHS procurement web site <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/msa/ccs/> and are responsible for checking the same site for any future notifications, amendments, etc. It is important that any and all Bidders who wish to participate are able to communicate with the RFQQ Coordinator via e-mail.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.1	PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION/QUOTATION	4
1.2	BACKGROUND	4
1.3	PROJECT SCOPE	4
1.4	MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS	5
1.5	ACQUISITION AUTHORITY	6
1.6	NONENDORSEMENT	6
1.7	ADA	6
1.8	NONDISCRIMINATION	6
1.9	DEFINITIONS	6
2	GENERAL INFORMATION.....	7
2.1	PROCUREMENT CONTACT INFORMATION	7
2.2	PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE	7
2.3	ACCEPTANCE OF RFQQ TERMS.....	8
2.4	CONTRACT	8
2.5	WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS	8
2.6	ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS	9
2.7	RESPONSE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS.....	10
2.8	PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE.....	12
2.9	MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PARTICIPATION.....	13
2.10	INSURANCE COVERAGE	14
3	PROPOSAL CONTENTS.....	15
3.1	LETTER OF SUBMITTAL (MR)	15
3.2	BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATES AND ASSURANCES FORM (MR).....	15
3.3	INTERPRETER SERVICES (MR).....	16
3.4	IDENTIFICATION OF COSTS (MR).....	16
4	EVALUATION AND CONTRACT AWARD	17
4.1	EVALUATION PROCESS	17
4.2	CONTRACT AWARD	17
4.3	DEBRIEFING AND PROTEST PROCEDURES	18
5	EXHIBITS.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.1	EXHIBIT A - DEFINITIONS	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.2	EXHIBIT B - BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES FORM	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.3	EXHIBIT C - SAMPLE CONTRACT	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.4	EXHIBIT D – STATEMENT OF WORK	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.5	EXHIBIT E – CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM – INTERPRETER REFERRAL AGENCY BID.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.6	EXHIBIT F – CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM – FREELANCE INTERPRETER BID.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.7	EXHIBIT G – CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM – DSHS REGIONAL MAP.....	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.8	EXHIBIT H - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM – INTERPRETER POOL ROSTER	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.9	EXHIBIT I – CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM – HOURLY RATE PRICE SHEET	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
5.10	EXHIBIT J – DSHS/ODHH FORM – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REGISTRATION	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.

5.11 EXHIBIT K – DSHS/ODHH FORM – REQUEST FOR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER..... **ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

5.12 EXHIBIT L – REQUIREMENTS – RID-NAD CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT.....**ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.**

5.13 EXHIBIT M – REQUIREMENTS – DSHS CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT68

5.14 EXHIBIT N – GUIDELINES – DESCRIPTION OF CERTIFICATION LEVELS70

5.15 EXHIBIT O – GUIDELINES – MATCHING QUALIFIED INTERPRETER WITH APPOINTMENT SETTING74

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION/QUOTATION

The state of Washington, Department of Social and Health Services, hereafter called "AGENCY", is initiating this Request for Qualification/Quotation (RFQQ) to solicit proposals from firms and individuals interested in providing sign language interpreter/transliterating services for persons who are deaf, deaf/blind, and hard of hearing.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In the 1990s, DSHS established personal services contracts with various interpreters and referral agencies to purchase sign language interpreter services. Due to a lack of consistency in the areas of interpreter service reimbursement rates and service delivery standards within those contracts, ODHHS organized and facilitated a committee to review sign language interpreter service delivery standards for the Department. The study culminated in a report to the DSHS Secretary recommending implementation of a statewide contract.

The procurement/management of the resulting statewide contract was under the Department of General Administration's purview. During the 2002 legislative session, adopted legislation (Chapter 39.29 and 43.19.190 RCW) gave DSHS the authority to procure and manage statewide sign language interpreter contracts on its own. In early 2005, ODHHS received the authority to procure and manage the sign language interpreter services contract. The new contract was established July 1, 2005 and extends through June 30, 2007. Every six months throughout this period, a new RFQQ will be established to accept bids from individual freelance interpreters and interpreter referral agencies not yet contracting with DSHS to provide sign language interpreter services.

1.3 PROJECT SCOPE

AUTHORITY: The Department of Social & Health Services (DSHS) programs and services provide reasonable accommodations for all persons including those with disabilities as authorized by Chapter 2.42, 49.60 and 70.84 RCW, WAC 1-08-150, 162-26-010, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

INTENT: The intent of this mandatory contract is to provide persons who are deaf, deaf/blind and hard of hearing, functionally equivalent access to quality communication through face to face sign language interpreting/transliterating for clients, citizens and employees of the State of Washington.

ESTIMATED USAGE: It is estimated that purchases between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007, will approximate \$750,000. Estimates are based on past usage. The State of Washington does not guarantee any minimum purchase. Orders with requests for sign language interpreter services will be placed on an as needed basis.

PURCHASERS/USERS: The primary purchasers/users will be the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and health care/medical providers of clients eligible for Medicaid. Members of the Washington State Procurement Committee (WSPC) and other state agencies will be able to use this contract as needed. Users have the need for interpreter services seven (7) days a week, 24 hours a day, 365-days a year.

TERM: Initial term of this contract will be from the date of award projected to be within 30 days after the Proposal Submission Due Date indicated in the Procurement Schedule in Section 2.2 of this document through June 30, 2007. Contract may be extended for additional terms or portions upon mutual agreement. No contract term shall extend beyond June 30, 2009.

1.4 MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Existing vendors under RFQQ #0534-173 are not eligible to bid. To be eligible to bid on this contract, bidders must meet the following specifications:

- **Interpreter Referral Agencies:** Have a minimum of one (1) certified interpreter employed or subcontracted; **Individual Freelance Interpreters:** Be certified, with the exception of qualified deaf interpreters.
- Be able to provide sign language interpreter services with competent and proficient interpreter(s) for each appointment.
- Be licensed to do business in the State of Washington.
- Have an interpreter residing in the region(s) that is/are bid.
- Be able to serve the entire county(ies)/region(s) that is/are bid.
- Be able to communicate as requested, with DSHS via telephone, email, facsimile, and/or pager and, if indicated, communicate during nights, weekends, holidays and emergencies.
- Be able to provide advance confirmation of appointments.
- Be able to immediately notify the requester if: unable to fill an appointment; the assigned interpreter is going to be late; or cannot find a replacement.
- Obtain the required amounts of insurance, after contract award, as outlined in this RFQQ.
- Maintain a file for each interpreter representing their agency, who may provide interpreter services under this contract, that contains the following documents:
 - a copy of the interpreter's sub-contract/agreement,
 - a copy of the interpreter's certificate (if applicable),
 - a copy of the interpreter's registration form,
 - a copy of the interpreter's Background Authorization Form,
 - a copy of the interpreter's Driver's License, ID Card, or Passport.
 - a copy of the interpreter's proof of orientation, and
 - a copy of the interpreter's proof of required insurance.
- Maintain and make available to DSHS a list of each person representing their agency, including their certification level, who may provide sign language interpreter services under this contract, and ensure they will be registered and approved with ODHHS.
- Ensure that each person representing their agency who may provide sign language interpreter services under this contract is aware of and adheres to the NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct and the DSHS Code of Professional Conduct.
- Conduct orientation to each person representing their agency within the first thirty (30) days of the interpreter providing services under this contract. Orientation must include the following:
 - An overview of the Statement of Work, billing process, and how to complete the "Request for Sign Language Interpreter" form,
 - NAD-RID Code of Professional Conduct and DSHS Code of Professional Conduct;
 - Record keeping requirements;
 - Photo identification requirements; and
 - All other specific requirements covered under this contract (Special Terms and Conditions and Statement of Work Requirements).

Bidders who do not meet these minimum qualifications shall be deemed non-responsive and will not receive further consideration.

1.5 ACQUISITION AUTHORITY

This RFQQ is in compliance with the policies and procedures outlined in RCW Chapter 43.19 and WAC 236.48.

1.6 NONENDORSEMENT

As a result of the selection of a Bidder to supply product(s) and/or services to the AGENCY, the AGENCY is neither endorsing nor suggesting that the Bidder's product is the best or only solution. The Bidder agrees to make no reference to the AGENCY in any literature, promotional material, brochures, sales presentation or the like without the express written consent of the AGENCY.

1.7 ADA

The AGENCY complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Bidders may contact the RFQQ Coordinator to receive this Request for Qualification/Quotation in Braille or on tape.

1.8 NONDISCRIMINATION

No individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with any program provided by this contract because of race, color, creed, marital status, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, Vietnam Era or disabled veterans status, age, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, or political affiliation or belief.

1.9 DEFINITIONS

See **EXHIBIT A, DEFINITIONS**, for the meaning of certain terms used in this RFQQ.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 PROCUREMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

Upon release of this Request for Qualification/Quotation (RFQQ), all communications concerning this RFQQ must be directed to the RFQQ Coordinator listed on the cover page of this RFQQ. The RFQQ Coordinator is the sole point of contact in the AGENCY for this procurement.

Contact the RFQQ Coordinator by regular mail or email if you have any questions or concerns related to any portion of this RFQQ. Any other communication will be considered unofficial and non-binding on the AGENCY. Bidders are to rely on written statements issued by the RFQQ Coordinator. Communication directed to parties other than the RFQQ Coordinator will have no legal bearing on this RFQQ and may result in disqualification of the Bidder.

Please contact the RFQQ Coordinator if you have any questions or concerns.

2.2 PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE

The Procurement Schedule outlines the tentative schedule for important action dates and times. The AGENCY reserves the right to revise this schedule at any time and will post any amended schedules on the DSHS Procurement website.

Procurement Schedule – all times are Pacific Standard Time.

Item	Action	Date
1.	Issue RFQQ – available for download from AGENCY Internet site	June 14, 2006
2.	Last Date for Accepting Bidder Written Questions by 3:00 PM	June 19, 2006
3.	Issue Response to Written Questions	June 23, 2006
4.	Proposal Submission Due by 3:00 PM	June 28, 2006
5.	Proposal Evaluation	July 5 th & 6 th 2006
6.	Notify Apparently Successful Bidders (ASB)	July 10, 2006
7.	Notify Unsuccessful Bidders	July 10, 2006
8.	Begin Contract Negotiations	July 10, 2006
9.	Bidder's Request for Debriefing Due by 3:00 PM	July 12, 2006
10.	Hold Debriefing Conferences (optional to Bidder's)	July 14, 2006
11.	Bidders' Protest(s) Due by 4:00 PM	July 21, 2006
12.	Signed Contracts due back from ASB	July 24, 2006
13.	Contract Execution	July 24, 2006
14.	Begin work	July 25, 2006
15.	Mandatory Contractor Orientation (1/2 day to be scheduled by ODHHS between these dates)	July 25 – 31, 2006

Potential bidders will have the opportunity to submit questions in writing regarding this RFQQ up until the date indicated in the Procurement Schedule.

2.3 ACCEPTANCE OF RFQQ TERMS

A Proposal submitted in response to this RFQQ shall be considered a binding offer. Acknowledgement of this condition shall be indicated by signature of an officer of the Bidder legally authorized to execute contractual obligations by submitting with the Proposal a signed **BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATES AND ASSURANCES FORM** attached hereto as **EXHIBIT B**.

2.4 CONTRACT

The AGENCY intends to award *multiple contracts* to provide the services described in this RFQQ. The Apparently Successful Bidder will be expected to sign a contract with the AGENCY that is substantially in agreement with the sample contract shown in **EXHIBIT C**.

The period of performance of any contract resulting from this RFQQ is tentatively scheduled for July 25, 2006 to June 30, 2007. The Agency reserves the right to extend the contract for two (2) one-year periods. Amendments extending the period of performance, if any, shall be at the sole discretion of the AGENCY.

Specific restrictions apply to contracting with current or former state employees pursuant to chapter 42.52 of the Revised Code of Washington. Bidders should familiarize themselves with the requirements prior to submitting a Proposal.

2.5 WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS

Proposals should be based on the material contained in this RFQQ, any related amendment(s), and any questions and answers directed through the RFQQ Coordinator.

2.5.1 EXHIBITS

Exhibits to this RFQQ are:

EXHIBIT A - DEFINITIONS

EXHIBIT B - BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES FORM

EXHIBIT C - SAMPLE CONTRACT

EXHIBIT D - STATEMENT OF WORK

EXHIBIT E - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM - INTERPRETER REFERRAL AGENCY BID

EXHIBIT F - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM - FREELANCE INTERPRETER BID

EXHIBIT G - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM - DSHS REGIONAL MAP

EXHIBIT H - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM - INTERPRETER POOL ROSTER

EXHIBIT I - CONTRACTOR BIDDER FORM - HOURLY RATE PRICE SHEET

EXHIBIT J - DSHS/ODHH FORM – SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER REGISTRATION

EXHIBIT K - DSHS/ODHH FORM - REQUEST FOR SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER

EXHIBIT L - REQUIREMENTS - RID CODE OF ETHICS

EXHIBIT M - REQUIREMENTS - DSHS CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

EXHIBIT N - GUIDELINES - DESCRIPTION OF CERTIFICATION LEVELS

EXHIBIT O - GUIDELINES - MATCHING QUALIFIED INTERPRETER WITH APPOINTMENT SETTING

Ensure that you have downloaded a complete copy of this RFQQ and all attached exhibits, as listed above. The procurement documents can be accessed at <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/msa/ccs/>. If you are unable to download the documents, you should contact the RFQQ Coordinator.

It is not a ground for protest if your copy of this RFQQ should be missing any exhibit or pages of the RFQQ.

2.5.2 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Bidders should fax, e-mail or mail written questions to the RFQQ Coordinator. Early submission of questions is encouraged. Questions will be accepted until the date set forth in the Procurement Schedule. Questions and Answers will be posted on the DSHS Procurement website as amendment to the RFQQ.

2.6 ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

2.6.1 COSTS TO PROPOSE

The AGENCY will not be liable for any costs incurred by the Bidder in preparation of a proposal submitted in response to this RFQQ, in conduct of a presentation, or any other activities related to responding to this RFQQ.

2.6.2 SIGNATURES

The Letter of Submittal and the Certifications and Assurances form must be signed and dated by a person authorized to legally bind the Bidder to a contractual relationship, e.g., the President or Executive Director if a corporation, the managing partner if a partnership, or the proprietor if a sole proprietorship.

2.6.3 REVISIONS TO THE RFQQ

The AGENCY reserves the right, at any time before execution of a contract, to revise all or a portion of this RFQQ and/or to issue amendment(s) to the RFQQ. If there is any conflict between amendments or between an amendment and the RFQQ, whichever document was issued last in time shall be controlling. For this purpose, the specific questions and answers from the Bidders and/or the pre-proposal conference, if any, and other pertinent information shall be provided as an amendment to the RFQQ.

Amendments will be posted on the DSHS Procurements Web site, if applicable. It is incumbent on the Bidder to visit the DSHS Procurement web site <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/msa/ccs/> in order to receive any and all notifications and amendments.

The AGENCY reserves the right to cancel or to reissue the RFQQ in whole or in part, prior to execution of a contract.

2.6.4 RESPONSE REJECTION

The AGENCY also reserves the right at its sole discretion to reject any and all proposals received without penalty and not to issue a contract as a result of this RFQQ.

2.6.5 RESPONSIVENESS

Proposals that do not address all areas requested by this RFQQ may be deemed non-responsive and may not be considered for a possible contract resulting from this RFQQ. All responses, as well as any reference material presented, must be written in English.

All proposals will be reviewed by the RFQQ Coordinator to determine compliance with the requirements and instructions specified in this RFQQ. The Bidder is specifically notified that failure to comply with any part of the RFQQ may result in rejection of the proposal and therefore deem the proposal non-responsive. The AGENCY also reserves the right, however, at its sole discretion to waive minor administrative irregularities and or informalities.

2.6.6 SINGLE RESPONSE

A single response (e.g., a proposal from only one responder) to the RFQQ may be deemed a failure of competition and, at the sole option of the AGENCY, the RFQQ may be canceled. Alternatively, the AGENCY may choose to name the single responder as the Apparently Successful Bidder.

2.7 RESPONSE PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

2.7.1 MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

A mandatory requirement (MR) is an essential AGENCY need that must be met by the Bidder. Mandatory requirements are scored as pass or fail. The AGENCY will eliminate from the evaluation process any Bidder not fulfilling all mandatory requirements or not presenting an acceptable alternative.

Failure to meet a mandatory requirement is grounds for disqualification; any of the following conditions shall constitute grounds for disqualification:

- The Bidder states that a mandatory requirement cannot be met.
- The Bidder fails to include information requested by or necessary to substantiate that a given mandatory requirement has been met. Supplemental material may be referenced, but the answer must be complete in itself. An answer of “will comply” is not sufficient substantiation.
- Responses must indicate present capability.
- The Bidder presents the information requested by this RFQQ in a manner inconsistent with the instructions stated by this RFQQ.

2.7.2 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

Submit one (1) binder marked “Original” and three (3) copies of your proposal. Clearly mark your response to the attention of the RFQQ Coordinator and with the RFQQ reference number as shown on the cover page to this RFQQ.

The proposal and all copies must be on standard eight and one-half by eleven inch (8 ½” x 11”) white paper. A font size not less than 12 point must be used. Identify each copy of your proposal by including on the front cover:

- Proposal to RFQQ 0656-201
- Sign Language Interpreter Services
- Your name or company’s name.

Bidders must submit the following documents and forms.

Interpreter Referral Agency	Freelance Interpreter
Letter of Submittal as outlined in section 3.1 of this RFQQ	Letter of Submittal as outlined in section 3.1 of this RFQQ
Bidder Information, Certifications and Assurances Form – EXHIBIT B	Bidder Information, Certifications and Assurances Form – EXHIBIT B
Interpreter Referral Agency Bid – EXHIBIT E	Freelance Interpreter Bid – EXHIBIT F
Interpreter Pool Roster – EXHIBIT H	Sign Language Interpreter Registration – EXHIBIT J
Hourly Rate Price Sheet – EXHIBIT I	Hourly Rate Price Sheet – EXHIBIT I
	Copy of RID/NAD Interpreter Certification
	Background Authorization Form – EXHIBIT Q
	Copy of “Report of Outside Employment” form (if applicable), DSHS 03-023
	Identification Verification Form – EXHIBIT P

Bidders mailing proposals should allow normal mail delivery time to ensure timely receipt of their proposals by the RFQQ Coordinator. Bidders assume the risk for the method of delivery chosen. The AGENCY assumes no responsibility for delays caused by any delivery service. Proposals may not be transmitted using electronic media such as facsimile transmission or e-mail. The proposal, whether mailed or hand delivered, must arrive at the AGENCY, at the address, date and time indicated on the cover page to this RFQQ.

Late proposals will not be accepted and may be disqualified from further consideration. The AGENCY reserves the right to disqualify any proposal and withdraw it from consideration if it is received after the proposal submission due date and time. All proposals and any accompanying documentation become the property of the AGENCY and will not be returned.

Responses to each question or request for information in the proposal must appear in the order presented in this RFQQ with the same headings used herein. This will not only be helpful to the evaluators of the proposal, but should assist the Bidder in preparing the response.

2.7.3 ACCEPTANCE PERIOD

The Bidder must certify in writing that all Bidder response terms, including prices, will remain in effect for a minimum of one-hundred-eight (180) days after the response due date and continue through the term of the contract. **EXHIBIT B – BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES FORM** is provided for certification purposes and must be completed and filed as a part of the Bidder's Response. Proposals providing less than the required number of days for acceptance by the AGENCY will be considered non-responsive and will be rejected.

2.7.4 ERRORS AND OMISSIONS IN PROPOSAL

The AGENCY will not be liable for any errors or omissions in the Bidder's proposal. Bidders will not be allowed to alter or supplement their proposal documents after the proposal due date unless the alterations are the result of a request by the AGENCY as noted below.

The AGENCY reserves the right to make corrections or amendments to the response due to errors identified by the AGENCY or the Bidder. This type of amendment will only be allowed for such errors as typing, transposition, omission, or any other obvious error. Any changes will be date and time stamped and attached to responses. All changes must be coordinated in writing with, authorized by, and made by the RFQQ Coordinator. Bidders are liable for all errors or omissions contained in their responses.

2.7.5 WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSALS

Bidders may withdraw a proposal that has been submitted at any time up to the proposal due date and time. To accomplish this, a written request signed by the Bidder, or an authorized representative, must be submitted to the RFQQ Coordinator. After withdrawing a previously submitted proposal, the Bidder may submit another proposal at any time up to the closing date and time.

2.8 PROPRIETARY INFORMATION/PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

Materials submitted in response to this competitive procurement shall become the property of the AGENCY.

In order to protect the integrity of the contracting process which is a vital state interest, all proposals shall remain confidential and will not be disclosed until after award and signing of the contract. It is the AGENCY's duty to conduct the state's business in such a way as to protect the public. In order to so protect, the AGENCY will not disclose bids before a contract is signed. This will ensure fair competition without undue advantage to any bidder leading to private gain and public loss. Thereafter, the proposals shall be deemed public records as defined in RCW 42.17.250 to .340, "Public Records" and shall be subject to all applicable public disclosure laws.

Any information in the proposal that the Bidder desires to claim as proprietary and exempt from disclosure under the provisions of RCW 42.17.250 to .340 must be clearly designated. Each page claimed to be exempt from disclosure must be clearly identified by the word "Proprietary Data" printed on the lower right hand corner of the page. Each page so identified must include a statement of the basis for such claim of exemption or the particular exception from disclosure upon which the Bidder is making the claim.

The AGENCY will consider a Bidder's request for exemption from disclosure; however, the AGENCY will make a decision predicated upon applicable laws. The Bidder must be reasonable in designating information as confidential. If any information is marked as proprietary in the proposal, such information will not be made available until the affected Bidder has been given an opportunity to seek a court injunction against the requested disclosure.

Marking the entire proposal exempt from disclosure will not be honored and will, in fact, be grounds for disqualification from the evaluation process.

The AGENCY's sole responsibility shall be limited to maintaining the above data in a secure area and to notify bidder of any request(s) for disclosure within a period of five (5) years from date of award. Failure to so label such materials or failure to provide a timely response after notice of request for public disclosure has been given shall be deemed a waiver by the bidder of any claim that such materials are, in fact, so exempt. Confidentiality is available only to the limited extent allowed in state law. The AGENCY may be obligated by law to disclose despite information being marked as confidential.

A charge will be made for copying and shipping, as outlined in RCW 42.17.300. No fee shall be charged for inspection of contract files, but twenty-four (24) hours' notice to the RFQQ Coordinator is required. All requests for information should be directed to the RFQQ Coordinator.

2.9 MINORITY AND WOMEN OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the legislative findings and policies set forth in Chapter 39.19 RCW the State of Washington, Department of Social & Health Services encourages participation in all its contracts by MWBE firms certified by the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises (OMWBE). Participation may be either on a direct basis in response to this solicitation/invitation or as a subcontractor to a Bidder/Proponent. However, unless required by federal statutes, regulations, grants, or contract terms referenced in the contract documents, no preference will be included in the evaluation of bids/proposals, no minimum level of MWBE participation shall be required as condition for receiving an award and bids/proposals will not be rejected or considered non-responsive on that basis. Any affirmative action requirements set forth in federal regulations or statutes included or referenced in the contract documents will apply. Bidders may contact OMWBE at 360-753-9693 to obtain information on becoming certified and/or regarding certified firms for potential subcontracting arrangements.

Proposals that meet any of the following criteria shall be considered responsive to this goal:

- The Bidder submitting the proposal is owned and operated by minorities or women and has been certified by the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises. Proof of certification must accompany the proposal.
- The Bidder will commit to subcontracting a minimum of ten percent (10 percent) of the contracting amount with a minority-owned business and/or four percent (4 percent) of the contracted amount with a woman-owned business. The subcontractor(s) must be identified in the Bidder's proposal and be certified by the Washington State Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises. Proof of certification must accompany the proposal.

If a minority or woman-owned business becomes certified during the period of this contract, the Bidder will be required to report such certified minority or women-owned firms to the AGENCY.

2.10 INSURANCE COVERAGE

The Apparently Successful Bidder must comply with the insurance requirements identified in the sample contract attached hereto as **EXHIBIT C**. The Bidder shall, at its own expense, obtain and keep in force liability insurance during the term of the contract. The Bidder shall furnish evidence in the form of a Certificate of Insurance that insurance shall be provided, and a copy shall be forwarded to the AGENCY within fifteen (15) days of receipt of notice of award.

3 Proposal Contents

Please respond to each item in the same order in which they appear.

3.1 LETTER OF SUBMITTAL (MANDATORY REQUIREMENT)

Bidders must provide a Letter of Submittal. The letter must be included as the first page of this section. The letter must be signed and dated by an individual with full authority to legally bind the entity submitting the response to this RFQQ. Signing the submittal letter indicates that the Bidder accepts the terms and conditions of this RFQQ and that the Bidder acknowledges and agrees to all of the rights of AGENCY including the RFQQ rules and procedures, terms and conditions and all other rights and terms specified in this RFQQ, including any amendments.

The Bidder's Letter of Submittal must include the following:

- Name, address, principal place of business, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of legal entity or individual with whom contract would be written;
- The name of your contact person for this RFQQ;
- State the location of the facility from which the Bidder would operate.
- The Bidder's guarantee that its Proposal will remain in full force and effect for 180 days;
- A statement substantiating that the person who signs the letter is authorized to contractually bind the Bidder's firm;
- Identification of the page numbers on the Bidder's Proposal that are marked "Proprietary or Confidential" Information; and
- Any statements you wish to convey to the RFQQ Coordinator, including any variations between your proposal and the RFQQ.

Provide the following additional identifying information as appropriate:

- If the Bidder or any party named previously contracted with the State of Washington during the past 24 months, indicate the name of the AGENCY, the contract number and description and/or other information available to identify the contract.
- If the Bidder or any party named previously was an employee of the State of Washington during the past 24 months, or is now an employee, identify the individual by name, the AGENCY previously or currently employed by, job title or position held and separation date.
- Bidders which employ or have on their governing board State employees or former State employees, as of the date of their proposal, shall identify such persons and their position and responsibilities within the Bidder's organization. If following a review of this information, it is determined by the AGENCY that a conflict of interest exists, the Bidder may be disqualified from further consideration for the award of a contract.

3.2 BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATES AND ASSURANCES FORM (MANDATORY REQUIREMENT)

Provide a completed **BIDDER INFORMATION, CERTIFICATES AND ASSURANCES FORM - EXHIBIT B**, signed by an authorized representative of the Bidder. Please include any attachments that are necessary.

3.3 INTERPRETER SERVICES (MANDATORY REQUIREMENT)

Contractor Bidder Forms are attached as exhibits to this RFQQ. Interpreter Referral Agencies and Individual/Freelance Interpreters must submit the appropriate forms as outlined in the following sections. Please respond to each item in the same order in which they appear.

3.3.1 INTERPRETER REFERRAL AGENCY

Provide the following completed Contractor Bidder Forms, signed by an authorized representative of the Bidder. Please include any attachments that are necessary.

- Interpreter Referral Agency Bid – **EXHIBIT E**
- Interpreter Pool Roster – **EXHIBIT H**

3.3.2 FREELANCE INTERPRETER

Provide the following completed Contractor Bidder Forms, signed by an authorized representative of the Bidder. Please include any attachments that are necessary.

- Freelance Interpreter Bid – **EXHIBIT F**
- Sign Language Interpreter Registration – **EXHIBIT J**

In addition, Freelance Interpreters who are certified should submit the following documents in order to bid for any contract awarded through this procurement

- Copy of RID/NAD Interpreter Certification
- Background Authorization Form
- Identification Verification Form
- Copy of “Report of Outside Employment” form (if applicable), DSHS 03-023

3.4 IDENTIFICATION OF COSTS (MANDATORY REQUIREMENT)

Provide a completed **HOURLY RATE PRICE SHEET – EXHIBIT I** signed by the Bidder or an authorized representative. Prices quoted shall remain fixed for the duration of the contract executed as a result of this RFQQ.

Interpreter Referral Agencies that sub-contract with freelance interpreters must indicate the rates paid to these interpreters on the price sheet. All bids with interpreter rates should be marked as proprietary.

The AGENCY will not enter into a contract with any successful bidder for rates exceeding the maximum hourly rate established in the EXHIBIT I.

4 Evaluation and Contract Award

4.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

Evaluation will be based only upon information provided, or associated, with the Bidder's response. In light of this requirement, Bidders should take every precaution to assure that references can answer all pertinent questions posed of them and that answers to RFQQ requirements are complete.

4.1.1 PROPOSAL REVIEW BY RFQQ COORDINATOR

Proposals will be evaluated strictly in accordance with the requirements set forth in this RFQQ and any amendments that may be issued. All proposals will be reviewed by the RFQQ Coordinator for completeness and compliance with the administrative requirements and instructions specified in this RFQQ. Responsive proposals will advance to the evaluation teams. A response of "will comply" or "meets requirement" is not sufficient and will be deemed non-responsive. The RFQQ Coordinator or a designated evaluation team member may contact the Bidder for clarification of any portion of the Bidder's proposal. Only proposals meeting the requirements will advance for further evaluation. If all responding Bidders fail to meet any single mandatory item, AGENCY reserves the following options:

- Cancel the RFQQ
- Delete the mandatory item

4.1.2 POINTS OF CLARIFICATION

While the AGENCY reserves the right for its evaluation teams to contact Bidders for clarification, Bidders should not assume that deficient answers will result in clarification requests. Bidders shall take every measure to provide complete answers to minimize requests for clarification from the AGENCY.

4.2 CONTRACT AWARD

4.2.1 SELECTION OF APPARENT SUCCESSFUL BIDDER(S)

The evaluation process is designed to award the contract to all Bidders whose proposal meets the requirements of this RFQQ. The final selection, if any, will be based upon the evaluation committee's recommendation after analysis of the proposal.

The RFQQ Coordinator will review the final scores and recommend to AGENCY management the Apparently Successful Bidder based upon the above criteria.

4.2.2 NOTIFY APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL BIDDER

The AGENCY will notify the Apparently Successful Bidder on or about the date and time specified in the Procurement Schedule of the selection of the Apparently Successful Bidder by written notice via mail, e-mail and/or fax. The AGENCY will notify separately the Unsuccessful Bidders on or about the date and time specified in the Procurement Schedule of the non-selection of the Unsuccessful Bidder by written notice via mail, e-mail and/or fax.

4.2.3 EXECUTION OF THE CONTRACT

If you are the Apparently Successful Bidder, you will be expected to sign a contract with the AGENCY and any subsequent amendments that may be required to address specific work or services as needed. A sample contract is attached as **EXHIBIT C** including the AGENCY's General Terms and Conditions.

In no event is a Bidder to submit their own standard contract terms and conditions as a response to this RFQQ. The Bidder may submit exceptions or modifications that their firm may have to the proposed terms and conditions as allowed in this RFQQ. The AGENCY will review requested exceptions and accept or reject the same at its sole discretion.

4.2.3.1 *NEGOTIATION*

The AGENCY reserves the right to negotiate the specific wording of the Statement of Work, based on the requirements of this RFQQ and the terms of your proposal.

If you fail or refuse to sign the contract or any subsequent amendment within ten (10) business days of delivery to you, the AGENCY may elect to cancel the award.

4.2.3.2 *SUBCONTRACTS*

Any subcontracts necessary to perform the contract shall be subject to the prior written approval of the AGENCY.

4.2.3.3 *CONTRACT AMENDMENT*

Additional services that are appropriate to the scope of this RFQQ, as determined by the AGENCY, may be added to the resulting Contract by a written amendment mutually agreed to and executed by both parties.

4.3 DEBRIEFING AND PROTEST PROCEDURES

4.3.1 BIDDER DEBRIEFING CONFERENCE

Bidders who submitted a proposal that was not selected will be given the opportunity for a debriefing conference. The RFQQ Coordinator must receive the request for a debriefing conference within three (3) business days after the Notification of Unsuccessful Bidder letter is provided to the Bidder via mail, e-mail or fax. The debriefing will be held within three (3) business days of the request.

Debriefing conferences may be conducted in person or on the telephone and will be scheduled for a maximum of one hour. Discussion at the debriefing conference will be limited to the following:

- Evaluation and scoring of your proposal;
- Critique of your proposal based on evaluators' comments; and
- Review of your final score in comparison with other Bidders' final scores without identifying the Bidders.

Comparisons between proposals or evaluations of the other proposals will not be allowed. Identification of the other Bidders, their proposals or evaluations will not be allowed.

4.3.2 PROTEST PROCEDURE

4.3.2.1 ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDY

Protests may be made only after the AGENCY has sent notification to the Apparently Successful Bidder and to the unsuccessful bidders. In order to submit a protest under this RFQQ, a Bidder must have submitted a Proposal for this RFQQ, and have requested and participated in a debriefing conference. It is the sole administrative remedy available within the AGENCY. All AGENCY determinations as a result of these protest procedures are final.

4.3.2.2 GROUNDS FOR PROTEST

A protest may be made based on these grounds only:

- Arithmetic errors were made by the AGENCY in computing the score;
- The AGENCY failed to follow the procedures established in this RFQQ document, or to follow applicable State or federal laws or regulations; or
- Bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest on the part of an evaluator.

4.3.2.3 PROTEST FORM AND CONTENT

A protest must state all of the facts and arguments upon which the protest is based, and the grounds for your protest. It must be in writing and signed by a person authorized to bind the Bidder to a contractual relationship. At a minimum, the protest must include:

- The name of the protesting Bidder, mailing address and phone number, and the name of the individual responsible for submission of the protest;
- The RFQQ number and name of the issuing AGENCY;
- A detailed and complete statement of the specific action(s) by the AGENCY under protest;
- The grounds for the protest;
- Description of the relief or corrective action requested.

You may attach to your protest any documentation you offer to support your protest.

4.3.2.4 SUBMITTING A PROTEST

Your protest must be in writing and must be signed. You must mail or hand deliver your protest to the RFQQ Coordinator using the same mailing or delivery address provided in this RFQQ for submitting your proposal. ***Protests may not be submitted by fax or email.*** The AGENCY must receive the written protest within five (5) business days after the debriefing conference.

4.3.2.5 PROTEST PROCESS

The RFQQ Coordinator will forward your protest to the AGENCY designated Protest Coordinator with copies of the following:

- this RFQQ and any amendments,
- your proposal,
- the evaluators' scoring sheets, and
- any other documents showing evaluation and scoring of your proposal.

The AGENCY will conduct an objective review of your protest, based on the contents of your written protest and the above materials provided by the RFQQ Coordinator.

4.3.2.6 *FINAL DETERMINATION*

The AGENCY will send you a written decision within five (5) business days after the AGENCY receives your protest, unless more time is required to review the protest and make a determination. The protesting Bidder will be notified by the RFQQ Coordinator if additional time is necessary.

The AGENCY will make a final determination of your protest and will either:

- Find that your protest lacks merit and uphold the AGENCY's actions;
- Find that any errors in the RFQQ process or in the AGENCY's conduct did not influence the outcome of the RFQQ, and uphold the AGENCY's actions; or
- Find merit in the protest and provide options for corrective action by the AGENCY which may include:
 - That the AGENCY correct any errors and re-evaluate all proposals affected by its determination of the protest;
 - That the AGENCY reissue the RFQQ document; or
 - That the AGENCY make other findings and take such other action as may be appropriate.

If the AGENCY determines that the protest is without merit, the AGENCY will enter into a contract with the Apparently Successful Bidder. If the protest is determined to have merit, one of the alternatives noted in the preceding paragraph will be taken.